

though Benson and Dowsett (in press for *Puku*) record a Zambian specimen from as far south as Lochinvar Ranch, 16° 00' S., 27° 15' E., on the Kafue River.

When in the course of re-arranging the Ardeidae in the collection of the National Museum, Bulawayo, the writer came upon a specimen of *A. idae* collected at Mount Selinda, 20° 24' S., 32° 40' E., in the Chipinga District of eastern Rhodesia. Obtained by the late C. Wilde on the 29th September, 1923, it is a male in non-breeding dress with wing 245 mm. Originally labelled *Ardeola ralloides*, it had been housed for many years in the small collection of the Queen Victoria Museum in Salisbury, before being transferred to the National Collection in Bulawayo. At some stage an unknown hand had written in pencil on the label "not Squacco Heron", but had apparently taken the matter no further.

The record of this Malagasy migrant from Rhodesia constitutes a considerable southward extension to the known off-season range and adds a new species to the avifauna of the South African sub-region. It may be noted here that the reference to "Rhodesia" under this species in Moreau (1966: 249) in fact refers to Zambia, when still Northern Rhodesia.

As there are now no less than four specimens from these two territories, it may eventually be shown to be a not uncommon visitor to this general region. It must surely be regular in Moçambique if only on passage and from whence there are still no records. These herons are seldom collected and such few records as exist have come about by chance as the two species would be most difficult to differentiate in the field.

#### References:

- Benson, C. W. and Dowsett, R. J. (in press for *Puku* No. 5). The Occasional Papers of the Department of Game and Fisheries, Zambia.  
Moreau, R. E. 1966. *The bird faunas of Africa and its islands*. London, Academic Press.

## A new race of White-breasted Alethe from Moçambique

by P. A. Clancey and Walter J. Lawson

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During the course of a recent collecting trip to the Manica e Sofala district of Moçambique (June and July, 1968), organised jointly by the Durban Museum and the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, a population of the White-breasted Alethe *Alethe fuelleborni* Reichenow was discovered in coastal forest at Dondo, just north of Beira. Unfortunately, only a single specimen was obtained, but as the newly discovered population is a coastal and not montane one, is so isolated from all others of the species and shows good diagnostic characters, we consider it desirable to erect a new subspecies on the basis of the limited material available.

*Alethe fuelleborni xuthura*, subsp. nov.

*Type*: ♂, adult. Coastal forest near Dondo, Beira, southern Moçambique (camp at 19° 34' S., 34° 44' E.). 20th June, 1968. Collected by P. A. Clancey. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M.Reg. No. 23,293.

*Description*: Similar to *A. f. usambarae* Reichenow, 1905: Mlalo, near Lushoto, Usambara, Tanzania, but mantle and rump less washed with olive, and more like *A. f. fuelleborni* Reichenow, 1900: between the Poroto Mts. and Tandala, south-western Tanzania, in this regard. Below clearer white, the breast without any dusky olivaceous squamation, and dark lateral panels less extended across the breast. Tail and upper tail-coverts uniform pale

ochraceous-tawny, not dull chestnut with a darker apical surface to the latter structure as in both *A. f. usambarae* and *A. f. fuelleborni*. Size large, as in *A. f. usambarae*: wing of one 112 mm.

*Material*: Known only from the unique *Type*.

*Range*: Currently known only from the evergreen coastal forest at the type-locality, which equals the Mzimbiti of Sheppard and other early workers. Range almost certainly includes the whole of the true coastal forest block which extends east of the *Brachystegia* belt northwards along the Mozambique littoral from about Dondo and Beira.

*Measurements of the Type*: Wing (flattened) 112, culmen from base 23, tarsus 32, tail 79 mm. Weight 52.3 gm.

*Remarks*: The discovery of *A. fuelleborni* in the Manica e Sofala district of Mozambique to the south of the Zambesi R. represents a great southward extension of the species' known range. It adds both a new genus and species to the South African list.

The unique specimen of *A. f. xuthura* was collected by P.A.C. as it was perched motionless on a low exposed but shaded branch in a patch of evergreen forest, which at the time of our visit was being sadly mutilated to supply charcoal for the inhabitants of Beira and to make way for primitive cultivation by indigenous Africans. Fortunately, enough pristine coastal forest remains immediately to the north of Dondo on the road to Semaqueza and Muanza to ensure the continued existence of this new form. When first seen, at about 8.15 a.m., the bird was mistaken for a *Sheppardia*, despite the greater size and white, not orange-buff, ventral surface. Despite every effort by the authors and Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, no further specimens were taken, though some medium-sized thrush-like birds were seen from time to time in the forest understorey. In the middle of July, Mr. Irwin, of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, again searched forest towards Dondo in an endeavour to locate further examples, but without success.

The colour of the soft-parts of the *Type* were as follows: irides dark amber brown; bill black; legs and toes pale pinkish flesh-colour. The stomach contents consisted of beetle remains.

For the loan of comparative material of both *A. f. usambarae* and *A. f. fuelleborni* we are grateful to our colleague, Mr. Irwin.

The characters of the three races of this species of alethe may be summarised as follows:

(a) *Alethe fuelleborni fuelleborni*

Head-top and nape raw umber; mantle and rump redder and about Dresden brown. Underside dull white, washed laterally with grey; dark lateral breast panels extensive and centre of breast squamated with greyish olivaceous. Tail dull chestnut, darkening apically. Wings 102-108 mm.

(b) *Alethe fuelleborni usambarae*

Mantle and rump more olivaceous tinged than last, the latter surface less reddish. Below clearer white, the squamation over the centre of the breast reduced. Size greater. Wings 112-120 mm.

(c) *Alethe fuelleborni xuthura*

As nominate race above, but clearer white below; lateral breast panels reduced and mesial squamation of olivaceous absent. Tail uniform pale ochraceous-tawny, not chestnut, darkening apically. Size as in *A. f. usambarae*.

The ranges of (a) and (b) are given by Ripley, in the continuation of Peters' *Check-list of Birds of the World*, vol. x, 1964, p. 62.

## ADDENDUM

Since the submission of the above description, we have received information relative to the obtaining of a further specimen of *Alethe fuelleborni xuthura* in coastal forest to the north of the type-locality by Mr. M. O. E. Baddeley, formerly taxidermist at the Durban Museum and now a freelance collector of specimens. The skin of the second Moçambique *A. fuelleborni* is in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. We are grateful to Major Melvin A. Traylor for confirming the identification.

A third specimen was taken by Mr. Baddeley in montane forest at 3,700 feet a.s.l. on Mt. Gorongosa, in Manica e Sofala, Moçambique, on 22nd October, 1968. This specimen, a ♀ in juv. – prebasic dress, is now in the collection of the Durban Museum. It agrees with the *Type* in the ventral and tail characters attributed to *xuthura*.

### The generic name for the Dovekie or Little Auk

by Alexander Wetmore and George E. Watson

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Two variant spellings proposed simultaneously for the generic name of the Dovekie or Little Auk are in current use. American authors follow Ridgway (1919: 706), Peters (1934: 350), and the A.O.U. Check-list (1957: 248) in using *Plautus* Gunnerus (1761: 263), while most Old World authors follow Hartert (1921: 1768), Hellmayr and Conover (1948: 345), and Vaurie (1965: 504) in using *Plotus* Gunnerus (1761: 263).

From examination of Gunnerus' publication both in the original Danish and in English translation, we consider that neither name is valid.

Gunnerus' name was overlooked until Richmond (1917: 615) brought it to attention, and as first reviser selected *Plautus* over *Plotus*, probably because Gunnerus labelled his plate 6 *Plautus columbanus* (corrected to *columbarius* in the errata in vol. 2), and because Moehring (1752: 65), the earlier reference cited by Gunnerus, gave *Plautus*. For the Latin purist, the classical, south Italian *Plautus* (flat-foot) may be preferred over later and Vulgar north Italian *Plotus*. *Plotus* may be derived also from the Greek adjective πλωτός (swimming).

Gunnerus was not consistently binomial in his 1761 paper, even in the sentence in which he cited the names *Plotus* eller *Plautus Columbarius*. The translation of the paragraph in question reads as follows: "If Teisten [the Black Guillemot] is to be called *Plotus columbarius* (Due-Dykkert [Dove-Diver]), then it is to be called *Plotus Columbarius major, extremo apice rostri incurvato*; to distinguish it from the little Peder Drikker [Dovekie] that I note one calls *Plotus* or *Plautus Columbarius*."

We, therefore, advocate return to *Alle* Link (1807: 46), a generic name which, unlike *Plotus* and *Plautus*, has not been used for any bird other than the Dovekie. *Plotus* Linnaeus (1766: 218) is a junior synonym of *Anbinga* Brisson (1760: 60). Our action in rejecting *Plautus* Gunnerus 1761, however, eliminates this as a senior homonym of *Plautus* Brünnich (1772: 78), which therefore becomes the senior synonym of *Pinguinus* Bonaterre (1791: lxxxiii, 28) the current generic name of the Great Auk. Reichenbach (1849-53: V) cited *Plautus* Klein for the Gull "*Larus glaucus* L. Gm." which is *Larus hyperboreus* Gunnerus (1767: 226 [note]).

*Plautus* Klein in the 1760 (p. 154) German translation of his pre-Linnaean Latin treatise likewise is to be rejected for lack of consistent use of binomials.